AN OLD-BABYLONIAN DIVINATION TEXT

BY

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PUBLICATIONS IN SEMITIC PHILOLOGY
Volume 9, No. 5, pp. 367–377, plates 2 and 3

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS
BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA
1929

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SEMITIC PHILOLOGY.—William Popper, Editor.
Cited as Univ. Calif. Publ. Sem. Phil.

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Volume 9, No. 5, pp. 367–377, plates 2 and 3
Issued May 23, 1929

University of California Press
Berkeley, California

Cambridge University Press
London, England

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INTRODUCTION

UCBC 755 is a divination text which augurs certain events affecting either the libationer or an individual who chances to pass by while the libation is being poured out. Although the remark, ina zarâqika, extends only to line 15, its force, most likely, covers all succeeding lines.

While, on the whole, one is able to see a certain logical connection between what happens during the libation and its subsequent results, no such connection can possibly be seen in lines 17 and 18: "If a man broke his cranium: neatness and uprightness will be in the man's house." There are a number of other difficulties in the text, such as, for instance, the description, "If a man's cranium is like the hod of the sungod," or "If a man arranged his cranium like a datepalm." But these are difficulties caused by incomplete understanding of further particulars.

Script and language place the text in the First Dynasty period. The tablet measures 123 mm. in height, 88 mm. in width, and 28 mm. in thickness.

TRANSLITERATION

1 [Šumma awêlu i-na] za-ra-qi-ka ni-pi-iḫ-šu iš-ta[-ab-bu-um . . .]
-tu-ma
2 [. . . . .]-i-[.]-ka
3 [šumma awêlu i-na] za-ra-qi-ka i-ku-ul-ma wa-ar-[ka-nu ni]-pi-iḫ-šu
4 iš-ta-ab-bu-um qa-tu-ka na-a[k-ra-am i-da]-a-ak
5 šumma awêlu i-na za-ra-qi-ka i-mi-it-ta-šu i-la-ak šu-m[e-li-šu la
i]-la-ak
6 e-li be-el li-mu-ut-ti-ka ta-a[z-za-a]z
7 šumma awêlu i-na za-ra-qi-ka šu-me-el-šu i-la-ak i-mi-it-ta-šu la
i-la-ak
8 be-el li-mu-ut-ti-ka e-li-i-ka i-za-az
9 šumma awêlu i-na za-ra-qi-ka a-na ṣi-it ^{d}Šamšim^{ši_im} i-la-ak a-na
^{d}Li-ba-ri-[im]
10 la i-la-ak mi-qi-it-ti be-el li-mu-ut-ti-ka
11 šumma awêlu i-na za-ra-qi-ka a-na ^{d}Li-ba-ri-i-im i-la-ak a-na ṣi-it
^{d}[Šamšim]
12 la i-la-ak be-el li-mu-ut-ti-ka i-za-az
13 šumma awêlu i-na za-ra-qi-ka ša-ar ir-bi-it-ti-šu mi-it-ḫa-ri-iš i-l[a-ak]
14 ka-ak-ku mi-it-ḫa-ru-tum
15 šumma awêlu i-na za-ra-qi-ka iq-ṣu-ur mi-li-i-tim a-we-lum a-šar
i-la-ku
16 zi-it-ta-am i-ka-al
17 šumma awêlu mu-uḫ-ḫa-šu iḫ-pi-i bi-ṣu-um ù ṣi-id-ga i-na bi-it
a-we-lim
18 ib-ba-aš-ši
19 šumma awêlu mu-uḫ-ḫa-šu iz-te-ir ši-ni-it ṭe-mi-im
20 šumma awêlu mu-uḫ-ḫa-šu ki-i-ma ṭu-up-ši-ik-ki ^{d}Šamaš di-ḫu-um
i-na bît awêlim
21 ib-ba-aš-ši
22 šumma awêlu mu-uḫ-ḫa-šu ki-i-ma gi-ši-im-ma-ri-im ip-ḫu-ur-ma
[. . . . .]
23 a-na iš-di-šu ga-ta-an a-we-lam ma-ru-uš-tum i[-maḫ-ḫaṣ]
24 šumma awêlu ri-ku-ṣu ḫa-ni-iq a-we-lam da-an-na-tum i-ṣa-ba-a[t]
25 šumma awêlu ri-ku-ṣu ip-lu-uš-ma ú-ṣi a-we-lum i-na da-[an]-na-tim
uṣ-ṣi-i
26 šumma awêlu a-na ṣi-it ^{d}Šamšim ip-lu-uš-ma ú-ṣi awêlu i-na [da-an-
na]-tim uṣ-ṣi-i
27 šumma awêlu iš-tu ṣi-it ^{d}Šamšim a-na ^{d}Li-ba-ri-im pa-li-iš
28 šu-te-ib-ru ru-bu i-na [da]-an-na-tim uṣ-ṣi
29 šumma awêlu ip-lu-uš-ma lâ ú-ṣi a-we-lam da-an-na-tum i-ṣa-ba-at
30 ú-ul ú-uṣ-ṣ[i]
31 šumma awêlu a-na ši-ni šu-zi-i-iz ši-ni-it ṭe-mi-im
32 šumma awêlu a-ga-am i-ip(?)-pir(?) ni-ši ri-ši-im

REVERSE

33 šumma awêlu ṣi-la-šu ša-lim ki-bi-is bît awêlim ša-lim
34 šumma awêlu ka-ka-b[i-šu . .]-li pu-ú-um e-li awêlim iš-ta-ka-an
35 šumma awêlu za-az-[. . . .] [. .]-pi-iš mi-li še-ir-tim
36 šumma awêlu za-az-[. . . . .]-iš da-an-an di-na awêlim
37 šumma awêlu ir-ta [. . . . .]-i bi-ṣu-um ù ṣi-id-ga i-na(?) bît awêlim
38 šumma awêlu ka-bu-uš ki(?)-ma ḫu-lí(?) im-ti pu-ut šarrim ib-ba-aš-ši
39 šumma awêlu iš-tu i-mi-it-tim a-na ṣi ^{d}Šamšim iš-du-ud ^{d}Ša-ta-li awêlam
40 i-na ni-di-ka iz-za-az
41 šumma awêlu iš-tu šu-me-lim a-na ri-ši-šu iš-du-ud-ma ^{d}Za-az-[. . . . .]
42 šumma awêlu a-na [i-mi-i]t-ti-šu ù šu-me-li-šu ka-bi-is li-ib-bi
43 na-ak-r[i-ka t]a-ta-na-al-la-ak mi-im-ma-šu ú-ul i-li-ig-gi
44 šumma awêlu a-na i[-mi-i]t-ti-šu iq-ṣu-ur-ma šu-me-el-šu ma-aq-ta-at
45 e-li be-el li-mu-ut-ti-ka ta-az-za-az
46 šumma awêlu a-na šu-me-li-šu iq-ṣu-ur-ma i-mi-it-ta-šu ma-aq-ta-at
47 be-el li-mu-ut-ti-ka e-li-ka iz-[za-a]z
48 šumma awêlu a-na ṣi ^{d}Šamšim iq-ṣu-ur-ma a-na ^{d}Li-ba-ri-im ma-qi-it
49 e-li be-el li-mu-ut-ti-ka ta-az-za-az
50 šumma awêlu a-na ^{d}Li-ba-ri-im iq-ṣu-ur-ma a-na ṣi ^{d}Šamšim
51 pa-ṭe-ir be-el li-mu-ut-ti-ka e-li-ka i-za-az

TRANSLATION

If a man, during your libation, burned his kindling . . . . . .
. . . . . you.
If a man, during your libation, ate, and subsequently
burned his kindling: your hand will kill the enemy.
If a man, during your libation, goes to his right (and) does not go to his left:
you will come forward against your adversary.
If a man, during your libation, goes to his left (and) does not go to his right:
your adversary will come forward against you.
If a man, during your libation, goes to the east (and) does not go
to the west: overthrow of your adversary.
If a man, during your libation, goes to the west (and) does not go
to the east: your adversary will come forward.
If a man, during your libation, goes everywhere to the four quarters of the compass:
the weapons are equal.
If a man, during your libation, gathered plenteousness: the man, wherever he goes,
will eat up the inherited portion.
If a man broke his cranium: neatness and uprightness will be
in the man's house.
If a man bent his cranium: delirium.
If a man's cranium is like the hod of the sungod: decrepitude
will be in the house of the man.
If a man arranged his cranium like a datepalm and he
is thin at his leg: disaster will happen to the man.
If a man's constraint throttles him: distress will seize the man.
If a man broke through his restraint and went forth: the man will escape distress.
If a man broke through to the east and went forth: the man will escape distress.
If a man is breaking through from the east to the west,
causing himself to be seen: a prince will escape distress.
If a man broke through but did not go out: distress will seize the man,
he will not escape.
If a man made an assignment to another: delirium.
If a man put on a turban: insubordination.

REVERSE

33 If a man's shadow is well: the path of the house of the man is well.
34 If a man's star(?) . . . . . : gossip will take place against the man.
35 If a man . . . . . his abundance: a flood of repentance.
36 If a man . . . . . his abundance: a lawsuit for the man.
37 If a man . . . . . his breast(?): neatness and uprightness (will be) in the man's house.
38 If a man's footprint(?) is like a path: terror will be in the presence of the king.
39 If a man moved from the right to the east: the god Šatali will face
40 the man to your praise(?).
41 If a man moved from the left to his top: the god Zaz . . . . .
42 If a man steps to his right and his left: you will walk
43 in the midst of your enemy (and) he will not take anything that is his.
44 If a man made [something] fast at his right and it is falling to his left:
45 you will come forward against your adversary.
46 If a man made fast at his left and it is falling to his right:
47 your adversary will come forward against you.
48 If a man made fast to the east and it is falling to the west:
49 you will come forward against your adversary.
50 If a man made fast to the west and to the east
51 he is loosening: your adversary will come forward against you.

ANNOTATIONS

Line 1: zarâqu, "to pour out," has here a ritualistic meaning. The verb ištabbum is restored from line 4; it is apparently from šabâbu, or šapâpu, "to burn." Nipḫu in this passage cannot have the ordinary meaning given in the dictionaries.

Line 3: The restoration of warkânu is probably correct.

Line 4: The sign qa is not very clear on the tablet. It looks as if the scribe intended to write ma and changed it to qa. The restoration of nakram idâk is plausible.

Line 5: The verb which expresses the action of the man, with the exception of i-la-ak in this and succeeding lines, is generally rendered by the preterite, occasionally by the permansive; in view of this fact one might consider i-la-ak to be the preterite of a middle weak verb lâku, but above, the verb is taken as the equivalent of illak.

Line 9: ^{d}Libarum seems to be an astronomical term for west.

Line 14: The occurrence of the plural of miṯḫâru = mithârûtum is noteworthy.

Line 15: i-la-ku, 3. pers. sing. in dependent clause.

Line 16: i-ka-al = ikkal.

Line 17: bi-ṣu-um = piṣûm, which is possible in an Old-Babylonian text.

Line 22: There is probably nothing missing at the end of the line where the tablet is scratched.

Line 23: Conjectural restoration.

Line 25: an in da-an-na-tim omitted by the scribe.

Line 26: The scribe omitted da-an-na in da-an-na-tim!

Line 28: He had trouble again and omitted the da in da-an-na-tim. Ru-bu = rubû?

Line 30: The Winkelhaken of the sign ul is not indicated in the autographed copy. On the tablet, however, it can be seen very faintly, joining directly with the lower horizontal stroke of the preceding ú. The ú following ul appears on the tablet as partly erased.

Line 31: Apparently a play on the words šini and šinit.

Line 32: The second sign of the verb looks like ip, but the writing of i-ip-pir would be rather awkward.

Line 35: Here and in the succeeding line zâzu, "abundance"?

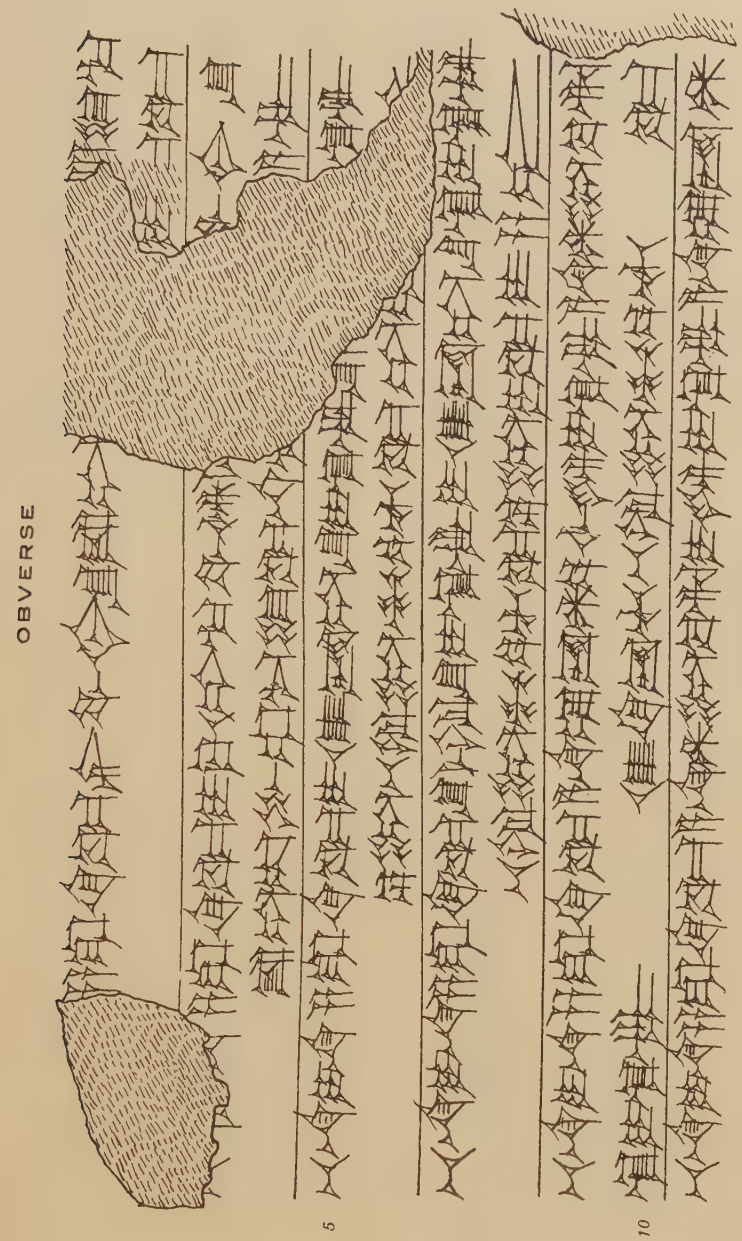
Line 36: The sign iš has been taken as containing the end syllable of the verb as is the case in the preceding line; here it is doubtful if it should not rather be connected with what follows.

Line 37: Compare line 17.

Line 39: The last sign in the line is probably intended for lù, awêlu.

Line 40: ni-di from na'âdu?

Line 41: ṣi = ṣi-it, as also in lines 39 and 50.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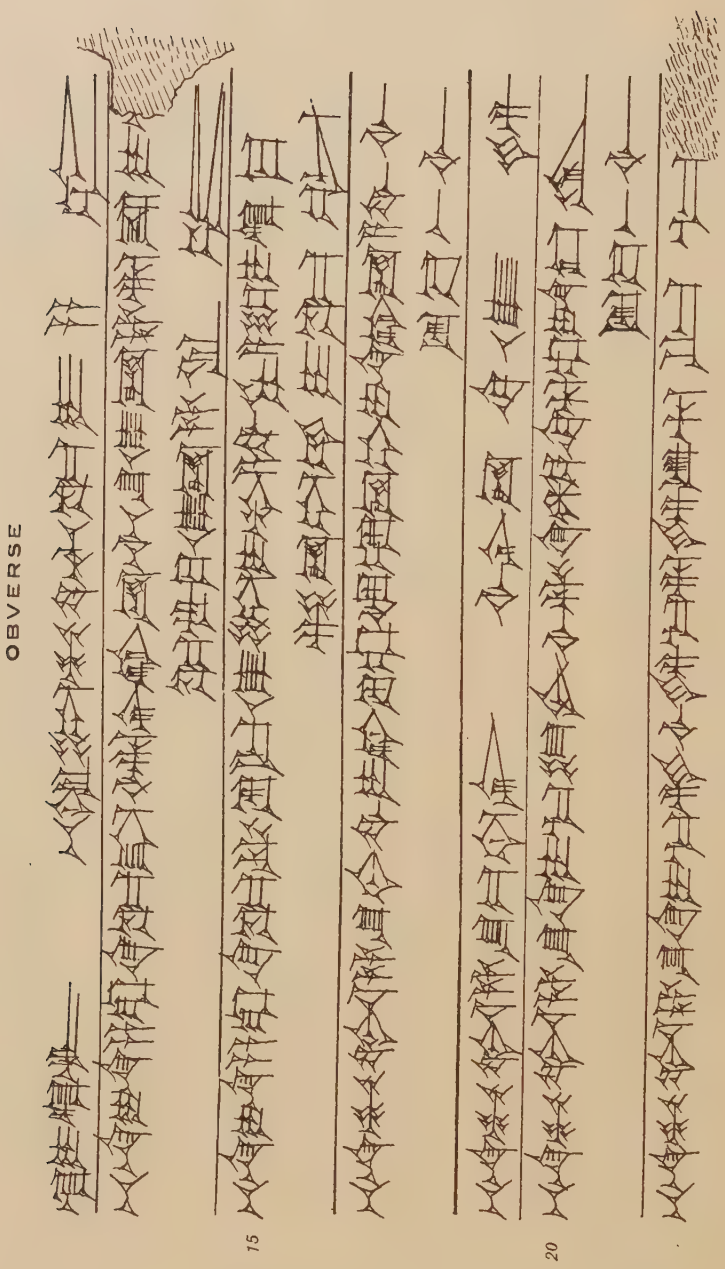
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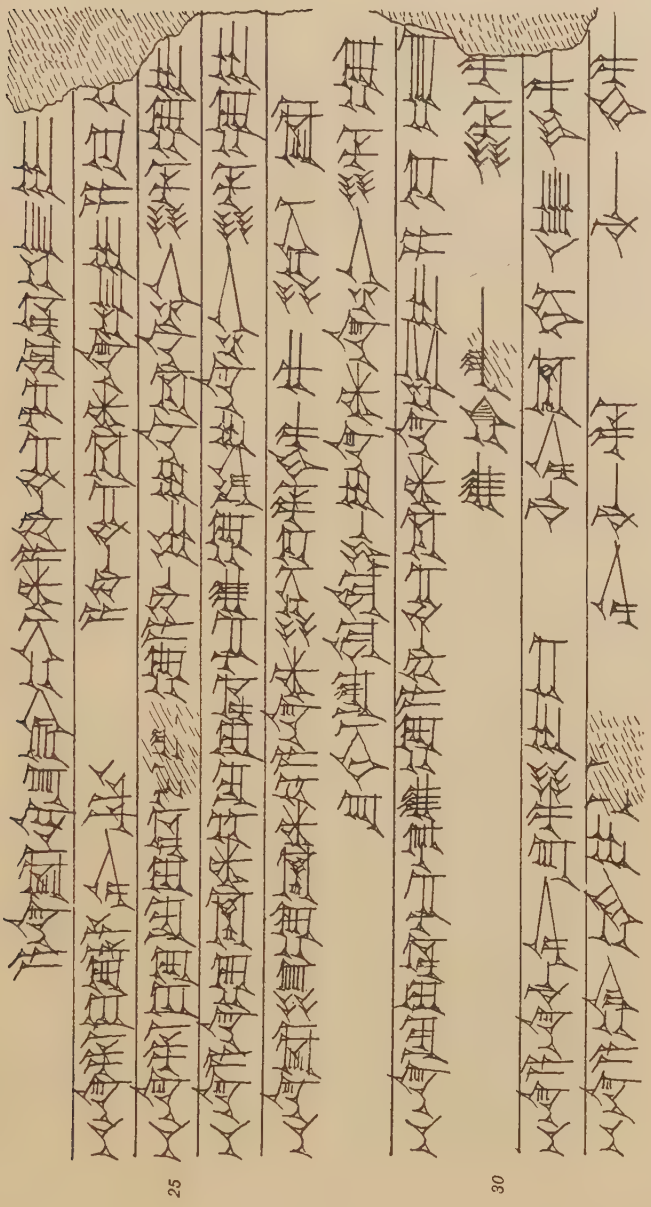
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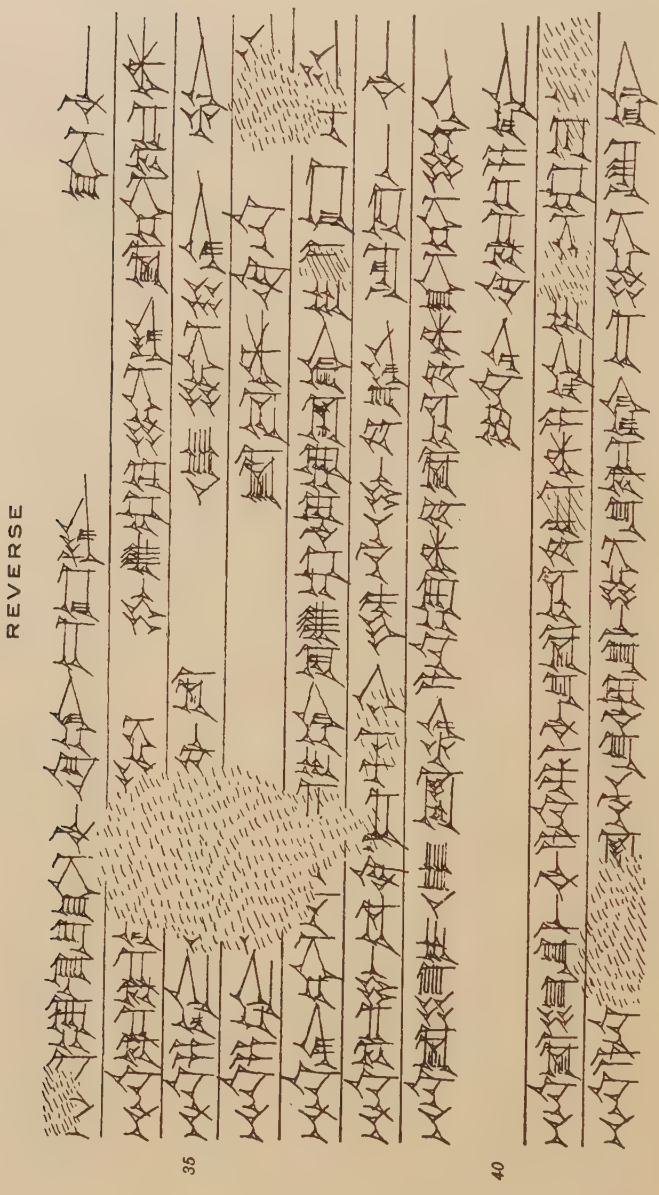
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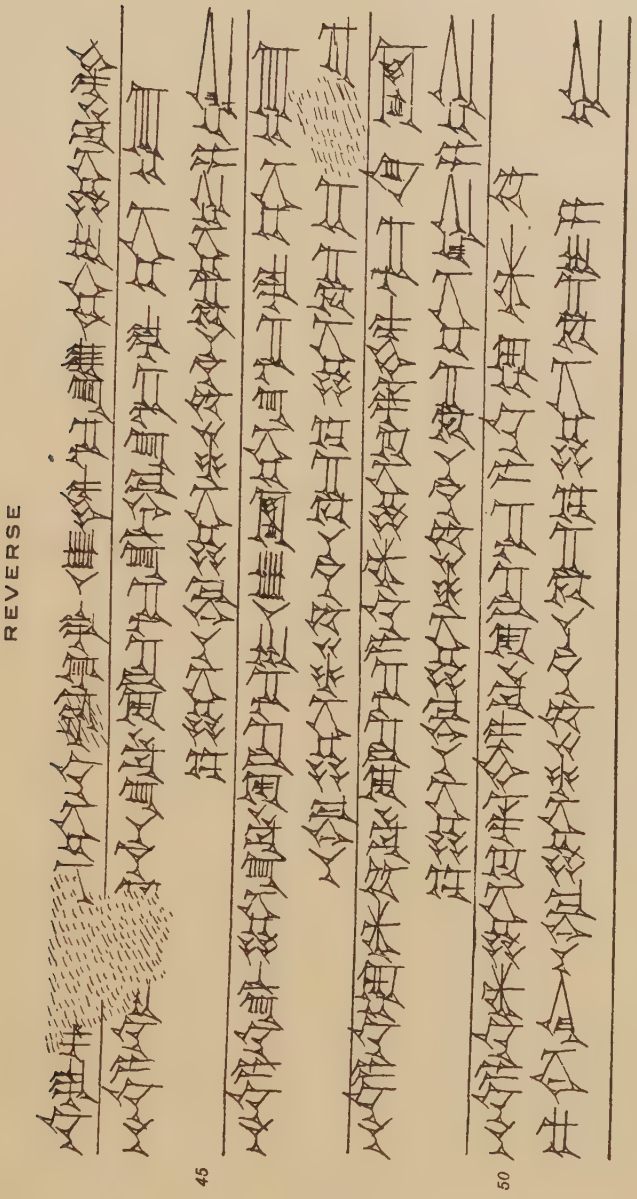
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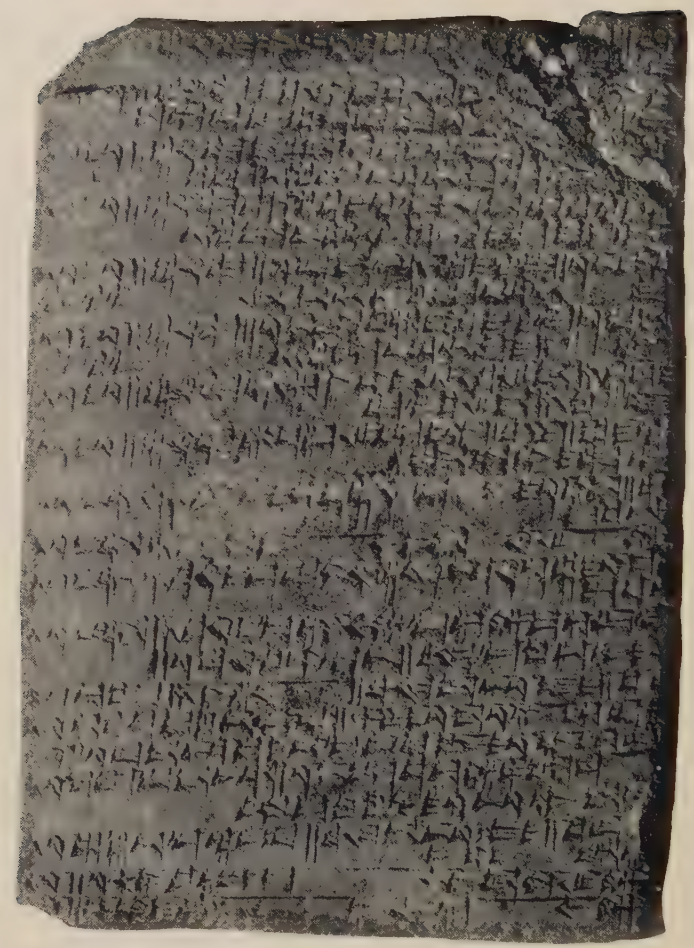

UCBC 755

(Obverse)

UCBC 755

(Reverse)